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PATENT AS

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of :
:
Yukihiro MATSUMOTO et al. :
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Serial No.: 09/883,266 :
:
Filed: June 19, 2001 :
:
For: PRODUCTION PROCESS FOR WATER-ABSORBENT RESIN :

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Prior to calculating the filing fee and prior to examination, please amend the above-identified application as follows.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please delete the specification as originally filed and insert the Substitute Specification appended hereto.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-9 as follows.

1. (Amended) A process for producing a water-absorbent resin, which comprises the step of polymerizing at least one monomer component including acrylic acid and/or its salt as major components to produce a water-absorbent resin that is a neutralized salt, with the process being characterized in that the acrylic acid is a product obtained by catalytic gas phase oxidation

of propylene and/or propane and has a protoanemonin content of not more than 10 ppm, and in that the resultant water-absorbent resin has a neutralization of not less than 50 mol%.

2. (Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the acrylic acid has a furfural content of not more then 10 ppm.

3. (Amended) A process according to claim 1, which further comprises the step of subjecting the acrylic acid to an alkali treatment followed by the polymerization step.

4. (Amended) A process according to according to claim 1, wherein the alkali treatment is a strong-alkali treatment such that the resultant neutralization ratio of the acrylic acid will be more than 100 mol%.

5. (Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the polymerization is aqueous solution polymerization.

6. (Amended) A process according to claim 1, which further comprises the step of crosslinking the vicinity of the surface of the water-absorbent resin.

7. (Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the resultant water-absorbent resin has a water absorption capacity of not less than 25 g/g under a load (of about 1.96 kPa).

8. (Amended) A process for producing a water-absorbent resin, which comprises the step of polymerizing at least one component including acrylic acid and/or its salt as major components to produce a water-absorbent resin that is a neutralized salt, with the process being